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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 07480 221720Z

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PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR MS. WEIDENFELD

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

REF: BRUSSELS 4532

1. QUIRINALE PALACE
THE QUIRINALE PALACE, THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE PRESIDENT OF ITALY, STANDS ON THE HIGHEST OF THE SEVEN HILLS OF ROME. IN ANCIENT ROMAN TIMES, THE TEMPLES OF QUIRINUS AND THE SUN WERE LOCATED ON THIS SITE. IN THE CENTER OF THE PRESENT QUIRINALE PIAZZA OR SQUARE ARE ROMAN STATUES OF CASTOR AND POLLUX, THE TWIN SONS OF JUIPTER IN GRAECO-ROMAN MYTHOLOGY. BETWEEN THE STATUES IS AN OBELISK WHICH ONCE STOOD IN THE MAUSOLEUM OF AUGUSTUS.
FACING THE PIAZZA IS THE OLDEST AND PRINCIPAL BUILDING OF THE QUIRINALE PALACE WHICH WAS BEGUN BY POPE GREGORY VII IN 1583 AND COMPLETED BY POPE PAUL V IN 1610. FOR THREE CENTURIES THEREAFTER IT SERVED AS THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE POPES DURING WHICH PERIOD ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS WERE ADDED TO THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE. THE ORIGINAL 16TH CENTURY PALACE IS WHERE OFFICIAL CEREMONIES ARE NOW HELD.
WITHIN THE PALACE IS A LARGE RECTANGULAR COURTYARD BORDERED ON THREE SIDES BY ARCADES. A LARGE DOUBLE RAMP STAIRWAY LEADS FROM THE COURTYARD TO THE FIRST FLOOR AND TO THE HALLS OF THE CORAZZIERI (PRESIDENTIAL GUARD) AND THE HALL OF
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PAGE 02 ROME 07480 221720Z

CEREMONIES, THE TWO LARGEST ROOMS IN THE PALACE. OFFICIAL

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

FUNCTIONS ARE HELD HERE AND ALSO IN THE SUITE OF ROOMS ALONG THE WINGS OVERLOOKING THE INNER COURTYARD.
THE FRESCOES DECORATING THE HALL OF THE CORAZZIERI AND THE OTHER FRONT HALLS OF THE PALACE ALL DATE FROM THE 17TH CENTURY. PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT ARE THOSE PAINTED BY PIETRO DA CORTONA AND HIS SCHOOL FOR POPE ALEXANDER VII. THE HALL FACING THE COURTYARD WAS DECORATED AFTER 1870 WHEN THE PALACE BECAME THE RESIDENCE OF THE KINGS OF ITALY.
ALTHOUGH THE QUIRINALE WAS USED ONLY AS A SUMMER PALACE BY THE POPES, IT BECAME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AFTER THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. FOUR CONCLAVES WERE HELD THERE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THE ELECTION OF FOUR POPES ANNOUNCED FROM THE BERINI LOGGIA ON THE SQUARE. THE QUIRINALE WAS LOOTED BY FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY TROOPS WHEN THEY OCCUPIED ROME IN 1798. IT THEN BECAME THE RESIDENCE OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND WAS AGAIN OCCUPIED BY THE FRENCH IN 1808 WHEN THEY ARRESTED POPE PIUS VII. THE PALACE WAS EXTENSIVELY REMODELED TO RECEIVE NAPOLEON WHO, HOWEVER, FAILED TO COME TO ROME. IN 1814, THE NAPOLEONIC APARTMENTS WERE OCCUPIED BY THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA AS THE GUEST OF THEN RESTORED POPE PIUS VII. AFTER THE POPE FLED TO GAETA DURING THE 1848-49 REVOLUTION AND ROMAN REPUBLIC, THE REPUBLICAN LEADER GIUSEPPE MAZZINI LIVED FOR A TIME IN ONE OF THE THE MANY ROOMS OF THE MANICA LUNGA, THE "LONG SLEEVE", SITUATED ALONG THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE PALACE.
VICTOR EMMANUEL II, THE FIRST KING OF A UNITED ITALY, ENTERED THE QUIRINALE ON DECEMBER 13, 1870. ALTHOUGH THE KING WAS REPORTEDLY NEVER ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE AUSTERE PALACE, FOR REASONS OF STATE AND TRADITION HE ESTABLISHED HIS OFFICIAL RESIDENCE AT THE QUIRINALE AND DIED THERE IN 1878. DURING THE REIGN OF KING UMBERTO I AND QUEEN MARGHERITA, THE QUIRINALE WAS THE SCENE OF AN ACTIVE AND EXCITING ROYAL COURT. HOWEVER, VICTOR EMMANUEL III AND QUEEN HELENA PREFERRED THE QUIET OF VILLA ADA LOCATED ON THE VIA SALARIA. UMBERTO II RESIDED IN THE PALACE ONLY A SHORT TIME, LEAVING ITALY IN 1946 WITH THE ABOLITION OF THE MONARCHY.
AFTER THE WAR, THE PALACE BECAME THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC, WHICH IT REMAINS TODAY.

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2. MRS. JOHN A. VOLPE
JENNY BENEDETTO VOLPE WAS BORN IN ITALY IN THE TOWN OF PESCOSANSONESCO IN THE PROVINCE OF PESCARA. THIS IS THE SAME TOWN FROM WHICH AMBASSADOR VOLPE'S FAMILY EMIGRATED IN 1904. MRS. VOLPE CAME TO THE U.S. IN 1914 AT THE AGE OF TWO. MRS. VOLPE IS A REGISTERED NURSE AND THE MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN, JOHN JR., WHO RESIDES IN ROME, AND JEAN WHO IS MARRIED AND LIVES IN SWAMPSCOTT, MASS. THE VOLPES

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HAVE FOUR GRANDCHILDREN. MRS. VOLPE WAS THE FIRST LADY
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS FOR SIX YEARS, IS
FOND OF ALL TYPES OF FLOWERS AND IS AN ACCOMPLISHED
AMATEUR PAINTER.

3. MRS. LEONE
THE GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF A SPANISH WOMAN, GRANDDAUGHTER
OF AN ENGLISHMAN AND THE DAUGHTER OF AN ITALIAN PHYSICIAN,
VITTORIA LEONE NEE MICHITTO, IS NOW THE WIFE OF THE PRESIDENT
OF ITALY, GIOVANNI LEONE. INITIALLY HER FATHER OBJECTED TO THE
JULY 1946 MARRIAGE BECAUSE OF THE COUPLE'S DIFFERENCE IN AGE:
SHE WAS 18 AND HAD APPLIED FOR ADMISSION TO A UNIVERSITY; HE
WAS 38 AND A LAWYER IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. DESPITE THE AGE
DIFFERENCE, THE LEONES HAVE HAD A HAPPY MARRIAGE.
THE FIRST LADY DOES NOT ENJOY THE LIMELIGHT. WHEN SHE MOVED
TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, SHE CONFIDED TO HER CLOSE FRIENDS
THAT SHE REGRETTED THE LOSS OF HER PRIVACY AND THAT SHE WAS
DETERMINED TO CHANGE HER WAY OF LIFE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.
FOR MANY YEARS MRS. LEONE WAS AMONG THE BEST DRESSED
WOMEN OF ITALY. SHE IS SAID TO HAVE A WEAKNESS FOR PUCCI,
BUT HER FAVORITE COURTURIERS ARE FORQUET OF NAPLES
AND VALENTINO OF ROME.
MRS. LEONE'S MAIN INTEREST IN LIFE HAS BEEN HER HUSBAND AND
HER THREE SONS: GIANCARLO, 17; PAOLO, 19; AND MURO, 27.
THE LATTER, A PAINTER AND PLAYER IN A COMBO, PLANS TO FOLLOW
HIS FATHER'S LEGAL CAREER. A POLIO VICTIM, HE UNDERWENT
SPINAL SURGERY IN LOS ANGELES IN 1961 AND THE LEONES VISITED
HIM THERE SEVERAL TIMES. MRS. LEONE IS VERY GRATEFUL TO
THE AMERICANS FOR MAURO'S CURE. FOR RELAXATION SHE ENJOYS
LITERATURE, PAINTING AND CLASSICAL MUSIC. SHE IS NOT BELIEVED
TO SPEAK ENGLISH. VOLPE

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